



# Montgomery County, Md.

For Immediate Release

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## Montgomery Councilmember Roger Berliner Proposes Reform Commission to Restructure County Government

County Executive Leggett Endorses Proposed 14-Member  
Panel That Would Be Jointly Appointed by Executive, Council

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ROCKVILLE, Md., April 19, 2010— Montgomery County Councilmember Roger Berliner (District 1) today sent a letter to his fellow Councilmembers proposing creation of a 14-member panel that would restructure County government—a move he said “gives us our best chance for meaningful reform.”

Councilmember Berliner’s proposed resolution, which will be introduced before the Council at the discretion of the Council president, has the endorsement of County Executive Isiah Leggett. Councilmember Berliner wrote that, under the resolution, “The County Executive and the County Council would jointly appoint a 14-person Montgomery County Government Structural Reform Commission. This Commission, composed of Montgomery County residents with experience and expertise in efficient service delivery systems, would be briefed by Executive Branch staff, Council staff, workforce representatives and other stakeholders on a range of restructuring options. The commission would then forward its findings and recommendations to the County Executive and the Council by Jan. 31, 2011.”

The resolution calls for the Council and the Executive to each appoint seven members to the commission. The Executive would appoint the chair and the Council would appoint the vice-chair. The commission members would be appointed by June 30.

“This initiative is consistent with my ongoing efforts to restructure County government,” said County Executive Ike Leggett. “I welcome Councilmember Berliner’s initiative and look forward to working with him and the Council on a thorough and comprehensive effort. We must continue our work to find additional savings.”

Councilmember Berliner said that the County should not wait to find reform methods prior to the commission's report. However, he said it would take the findings of a joint commission such as this one to make long-term structural changes that would have significant fiscal impact on County government.

"This proposal and resolution is not intended to suggest that we, as a government, should not take immediate action—in this budget—wherever we can to restructure our services to minimize duplication and increase efficiencies," Councilmember Berliner wrote. "We can and we should move forward on discrete reforms that are ripe and compelling. However, it is clear that our efforts over the course of the next month will mark the beginning, not the end, of a serious restructuring effort, and that the work of the Commission would allow the Council to make significantly more progress in FY 2012."

*The complete text of Councilmember Berliner's letter to the County Council:*

Dear Colleagues:

Over the course of the past several months almost everyone on the Council has expressed frustration over the lack of progress in restructuring our county government. We have all noted areas of redundancy – including the delivery of recreational services, public safety, procurement, and after school programming, to name just a few. The need to provide government services in the most efficient manner possible becomes even more imperative in the midst of a fiscal crisis that could last for years.

I share this frustration and have met with the County Executive to explore a path forward that seeks to address the institutional barriers that stand in the way of achieving the degree of progress we all seek. The County Executive and I are in agreement that the approach reflected in the attached proposed resolution gives us our best chance for meaningful reform.

Under the terms of the resolution, the County Executive and the County Council would jointly appoint a 14 person Montgomery County Government Structural Reform Commission. This Commission, composed of Montgomery County residents with experience and expertise in efficient service delivery systems, would be briefed by executive branch staff, council staff, workforce representatives, and other stakeholders on a range of restructuring options. The Commission would then forward its findings and recommendations to the County Executive and the Council by January 31, 2011.

Unlike past efforts, these recommendations would not "sit on the shelf." Under the terms of the resolution, the County Executive would forward to the Council those recommendations he supports pursuant to Sec. 217 of the County Charter. Under that provision, the recommendations would become law unless the County Council affirmatively rejects the recommendations within 90 days of the Executive's submission. The resolution also calls upon the Council to introduce, in bill form, any of the other Commission recommendations that were not endorsed by the County Executive, to hold public hearings on all of the recommendations, and to vote up or down on all of the measures prior to adoption of the FY 2012 operating budget.

This approach recognizes reality—it is almost impossible for a government to effectively reorganize itself given what is at stake for our workforce, their managers, and their respective organizations. A carefully chosen expert Commission, staffed by the Council and Executive branch, that listens carefully, discerns clearly, and then presents their findings for an up or down vote provides a constructive, objective, and timely path to progress.

This proposal and resolution is not intended to suggest that we, as a government, should not take immediate action—in this budget—wherever we can to restructure our services to minimize duplication and increase efficiencies. We can and we should move forward on discrete reforms that are ripe and compelling. However, it is clear that our efforts over the course of the next month will mark the beginning, not the end, of a serious restructuring effort, and that the work of the Commission would allow the Council to make significantly more progress in FY 2012.

I will be introducing this resolution next week and would be pleased to have you as co-sponsors.

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